

Allison Hill (Houses)

HABS No. PA-5203

Bounded on the north by State Street, on
the east by 17th Street, on the South by
Berryhill Street, and on the west by
Crescent Street and Royal Terrace.]

Harrisburg

Dauphin County

Pennsylvania

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ALLISON HILL
(Houses)

HABS No. PA-5203

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Descriptive Information

Allison Hill, within Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, encompasses a considerable portion of the City. It extends roughly from State Street on the North, to Berryhill Street to the south, and from Crescent Street and Royal Terrace on the west to 17th Street on the east. The area's name is well indicative of the dramatic change in topography that occurs upon entering the area via the downtown.

As often occurs in City neighborhoods, street patterns define the Allison Hill Area. Market and Derry Streets are major, radial, traffic arteries that traverse the area in an east/westerly direction and link Allison Hill with downtown Harrisburg. State Street, still another major traffic artery, borders the area to the north and links Allison Hill not only to downtown, but also to suburban development to the east, becoming Walnut Street, Jonestown Road and eventually Allentown Boulevard. Thirteenth Street and Seventeenth Street, major cross streets, traverse the area running north/south. The Allison Hill Area consists of a modified grid pattern effected by typography and by the radial pattern of its major streets.

The Allison Hill Area is essentially residential in character, with neighborhood commercial development occurring on Market, Derry, Walnut and South 13th Streets. The area is intensely developed with residences commonly occurring on narrow streets and alleyways, with yard space being quite limited. Within Allison Hill, brick is the primary building material; however, individual frame structures and frame rows are not unusual and make up perhaps twenty to thirty percent of the building stock. Frame structures are more prevalent in the northwestern part of the area, closest to the downtown, as this part of Allison Hill was the first to be developed.

Many of the area's buildings are characterized by single story front porches of zero set backs or with small front yards. Although most area homes are one and two family structures, multifamily buildings of three to six and more units are to be found scattered throughout the Allison Hill Area. Concentrations of multifamily structures are to be found on Market Street, Derry Street and N. 13th Street. Street patterns consist of two, two and a half and three story attached and semi-detached rows with three story row housing being most pervasive.

Numerous buildings of architectural and or historical significance are to be found within the Allison Hill Area, including commercial buildings, individual residences and mansions and school buildings. Buildings which are noteworthy include the McFarland Printers and Publishers Building, located at Mulberry and Crescent Streets, the Webster Public School (which is now the Spanish Community Center) located at South 13th and Kittatiny Streets, the DeVout Mansion, located at 208 Hummel Street,

the Steven's Mansion, located at 240 S. 13th Street, the Carson Stamm Mansion located at 333 S. 13th Street, the Max P. Johnson House located at 320 S. 14th Street, the Charles Lingle House located at 1338 Derry Street, the Ellsworth G. Hoover House, located at 100 Evergreen Street, the Aldinger Mansion, located at 18 N. 13th Street, the Center Printing Press, located at 13th and Walnut Streets, the McCloskey Memorial School, located at 1457 Market Street, the John Alonzo Affleck House, located at 32 N. 16th Street. Additionally, the area includes many outstanding church buildings as follows: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, located at 1449 Market Street, Market Street Baptist Church, located at 15th and Market Streets, the Fourth United Church of Christ, located at 16th and Market Streets, St. John C.M.E. Church, located at Shoop and N. 15th Streets, Park Street Evangelical Church, located at Park and N. 16th Streets, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at S. 13th and Thompson Streets, Steven's Memorial United Methodist Church, located at 113 S. 13th Street, First Church of the Brethern, located at 217-221 Hummel Street, Olivet Presbyterian Church, located at Derry and Kittatiny Streets and Derry Street Evangelical United Brethern Church located at Derry and S. 15th Street.

The architecture of this area is diverse in style, yet cohesive in scale and detail, providing a good overview of late 19th Century styles. Prominent styles include Federal, Italianate, Second Empire, Vernacular Gothic Revival, Carpenter Gothic, Flemish Gable, Victorian Romanesque, Romanesque Revival, Eastlake, Queen Anne and a few unusual Art Nouveau influenced townhouses. Many vernacular revisions of the above as well as Victorized Federal style buildings are to be found in the area as well. Wood or stone trim is often elaborately detailed. High quality workmanship and townhouse design are apparent in the area in woodwork, cornice lines and porch detailing, and corbelled brick cornices.

The Market Street corridor is especially noteworthy since it contains a continuum of architectural styles and a traditional interplay of commercial residential structures. The development of this street can be easily traced in an eastward movement along Market Street. The significance of other major thoroughfares such as Walnut Street has been negatively impacted by demolition and modern intrusions.

Major arteries, Derry, Thirteenth and Seventeenth Street especially, suffer from inharmonious alterations or new construction. This is due to the commercial character of these blocks in an historic sense, and the change that has taken place in shopping and living patterns. The streetscape on these streets is much less cohesive than on those in primarily residential areas.

Virtually the entire area has architectural merit, but some areas are more intact and cohesive than others. Despite intrusions, Thirteenth, Derry and Berryhill Streets are important development corridors offering a continuum of architectural styles. Side streets frequently have the

intact decorative details and cohesive streetscapes that help create a definite sense of place and time. Individually, many buildings are of striking design, while collectively the area presents a visually intriguing vista. In this regard, approximately half of the Allison Hill Area has received District status effective January 17, 1985 and has been federally designated as the Mount Pleasant Historic District. (See attached maps for Mount Pleasant's geographic relationship to Allison Hill).

Historical Information

Allison Hill developed from about 1870 to 1920, with most development occurring between 1890 and 1910. The Hill got its name from William Allison, an Irish immigrant who owned much of the land included within the area's boundaries. This was the first area to develop east of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks and the Pennsylvania Canal.

A portion of Allison Hill lies within the original 1860 City boundaries. Most of the area, however, (all that lies east of Thirteenth Street) was not added to the City until 1869 as part of the 1869 City Annexation. Individual tracts of land were laid out on Allison Hill in the 1860's and 1890's.

The completion of the original State Street Bridge in 1873 spurred development on Allison Hill. The completion of the Mulberry Street Bridge in 1890 spurred the development of Mount Pleasant, the southern portion of Allison Hill. Derry Street, which feeds from Mulberry Street was at one time a stage coach route to the east, and State, Walnut and Market Streets were at one time along the City's trolley line.

The development of the Hill area was also unmistakably influenced by the construction of a rail line to the east, which by the 1880's was lined with factories offering work opportunities for both men and women. Local industrialists such as William and John Hildrop, of Harrisburg Car Manufacturing Company, Dunkle and Ewing of Harrisburg Manufacturing and Boiler Company and Affleck and Disbrow of Harrisburg Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Company pushed the rail line extension and acquired and subdivided land for housing for their future employees. The Brookwood Neighborhood, within Mount Pleasant, was one of the largest residential developments laid out on the Hill. In 1889 all the land from Derry Street to Berryhill Street, between Fifteenth and Seventeenth Streets were subdivided into lots as part of Brookwood.

The Allison Hill Area, although early tied into the transportation network of Harrisburg's downtown, is clearly separate and distinct from the government based, riverfront development of Harrisburg City Center. The Allison Hill Area developed as a self contained community, combining work and residence; an important example of the 19th Century Industrial City.

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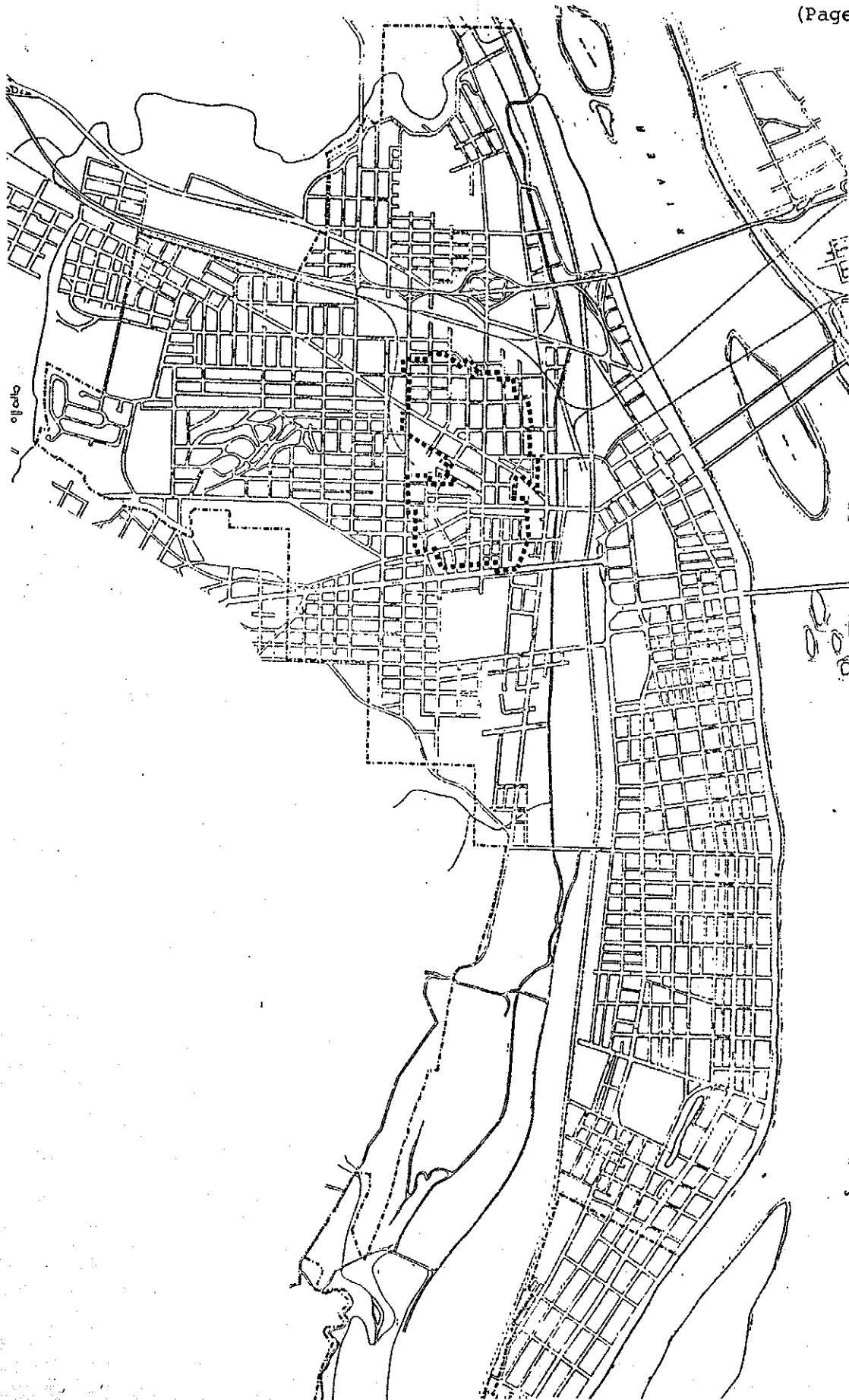
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For information on individual structures in the Allison
Hill area, see HABS No.s PA-5203-A-W

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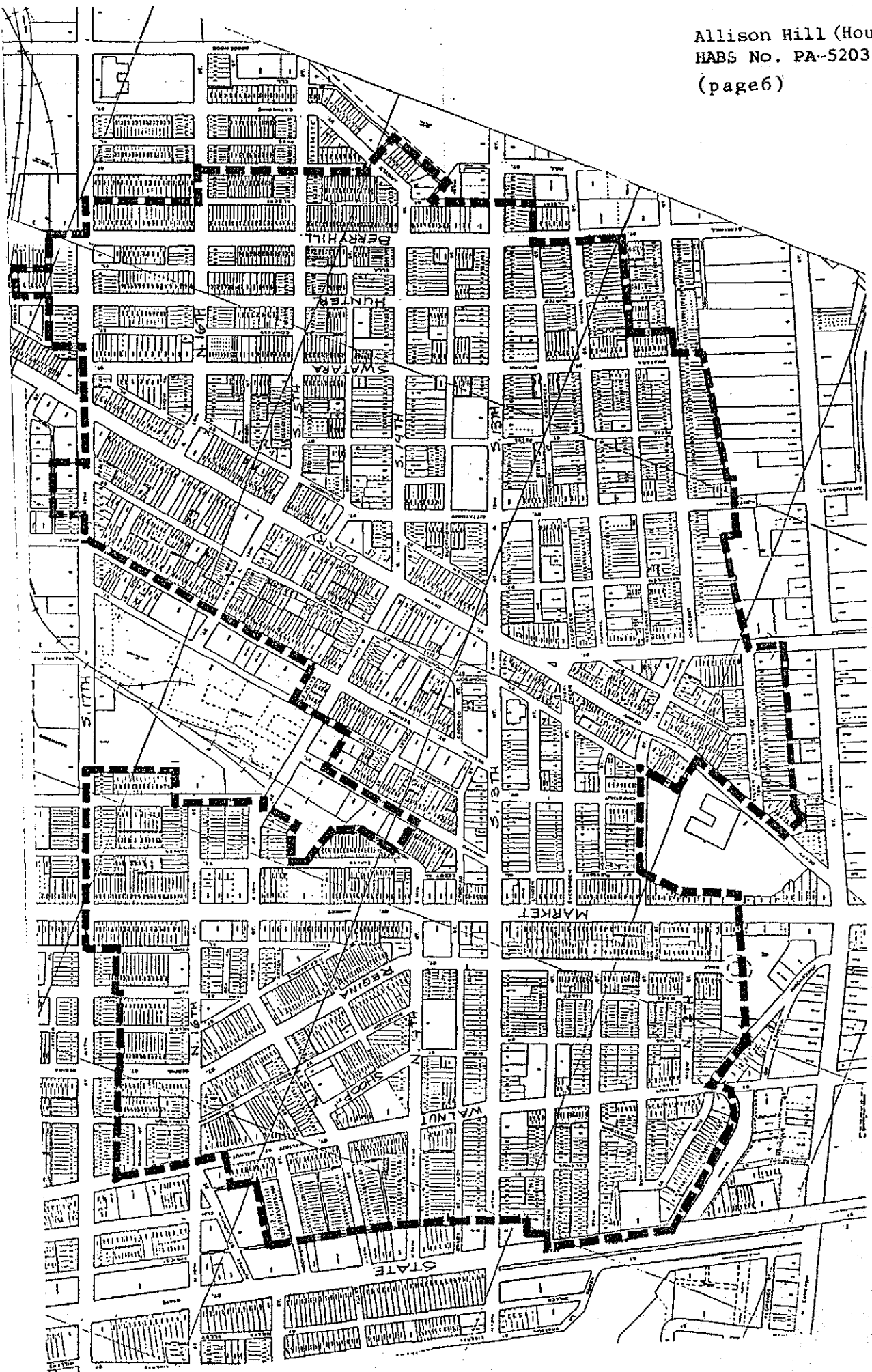
Allison Hill Historic District, Harrisburg, PA

Allison Hill (Houses)
HABS No. PA-5203
(Page 5)



Allison Hill Historic District, Harrisburg, PA

Allison Hill (Houses)
HABS No. PA-5203
(page6)



ALLISON HILL'S RELATIONSHIP
TO THE MOUNT PLEASANT HISTORIC DISTRICT

